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MR. DICKINSON'S

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL OF

GOV. FITCH.

A SERMON,

DELIVERED AT THE

FUNERAL

OF THE

HON. THOMAS FITCH, ESQ.,

LATE GOVERNOR OF THE COLONY OF CONNECTICUT,

BY MOSES DICKINSON, A.M.,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN NORWALK.

PSALM CXII. 6.—The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.

NEW HAVEN:

PRINTED BY THOMAS AND SAMUEL GREEN.

M,DCC,LXXIV.

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1874, April 16.
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A FUNERAL SERMON.

ACTS XIII, 26.

For David after he had served his generation, by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.

THE Christian religion is founded upon the resurrection of Christ. For if Christ is raised from the dead, then all the doctrines of our holy religion, are divinely true; *but if Christ be not raised, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins.* That our Saviour put the proof of his divine mission, upon this event, was publicly known; *so that the chief priests, and pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, sir, we remember, that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, after three days I will rise again. And accordingly*, with Pilate's consent, *they made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.* But *it was not possible, that he should be holden by the pains of death: for him hath God raised up, and exalted with his right hand, to be a prince and Saviour; for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.* The Apostles therefore everywhere insist upon the importance of this Revelation on which so much depends. And particularly in our text, and context, the Apostle Paul undertakes to prove, that David did not speak of himself; but in the person of Christ; when he says in the 16th Psalm, *Thou wilt not suffer thine holy One to see corruption. For he whom God raised again, saw no corruption. But David after he had served his generation, by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.*

But from these words we may observe:

I. That men can never obtain a better, and a more hon-

orable character, than by serving their generation by the will of God.

II. That good men must die as well as others.

III. That they who serve their generation, by the will of God, will when they die, sleep in Jesus, and rest from their labors.

I. That men can never obtain a better, and a more honorable character, than by serving their generation, by the will of God.

I shall here,

1. I shall endeavor to shew what is implied, by serving our generation by the will of God.

2. Shew the evidences of this truth.

1. I shall endeavour to shew what is implied, by serving our generation by the will of God.

And,

1. To serve our generation by the will of God, implies, that we have a gracious respect to God, in every business of life, that we are employed in. His glory must be the governing end of our lives. *Whether, therefore,* (says the Apostle), *ye eat, or drink, or whatever ye do; do all to the glory of God.* But men cannot sincerely aim at the glory of God, in any one thing that they do, unless they are renewed by divine grace. Mankind are in such a state of depravity, *that all the world are become guilty before God.* Not only abandoned sinners, *whose sins go before hand to judgment;* such as are mentioned I. Cor. 9, 10. *Fornicators, idolators, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, and extortioners;* but those who are more sober, and civilized, while unregenerate, are continually exposed to the wrath of God, *who is a consuming fire.* All the descendants of Adam, *are children of wrath by nature,* one as well as another. We may all say of ourselves, what David said of himself, Psal. 51, 5, *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

Hence it follows, that there is an absolute necessity, *that we should be created in Christ Jesus, unto good works;* and that our hearts should *be circumcised, that we may love the Lord our God, with all our hearts, and with all our souls,* and act from an higher principle than mere self love. *For none of us should live to himself, and no man should die to himself. For whether we live, we should live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we should die, unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we may be the Lord's.* But,

2. To serve our generation by the will of God, implies that we are employed in some proper business, whereby we may provide for our own comfort, and be useful to others. Idleness is a sin, that is testified against in the holy scriptures, and discountenanced in all civilized states. It contradicts the end of our creation, makes men become a burden to the world, and makes them become a prey, to every vile lust and temptation. All creatures in heaven and earth, are employed in the service of God, mankind only excepted; and they are generally useful, and serviceable to us. The blessed angels, and glorified saints, rest without rest, day and night, sounding forth the praises of their great Creator. What good offices departed saints do for us, we know not; tho' we know that they are concerned for our welfare. But the angels *are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister, to them that shall be heirs of salvation.* The sun, moon and stars, continually praise God; and minister to our support and comfort; and the air, earth, and sea, and all that in them is, contribute to promote the same end. Surely then we should not be idle, when all the world around us, is at work. But, however, we had better be idle, and do nothing at all, than to be employed, in doing mischief. And, therefore, the business that we should be engaged in, should be a lawful employment. *They that will be rich,* by following an unlawful occupation, *fall into temptation, and a snare, and into any foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruc-*

tion and perdition. But the employment that we are occupied in, should not only be lawful, but it should be what we are fitted for. Men have different inclinations, different capacities, and different advantages, arising from bodily strength or from the strength of a natural genius, or from the manner of their education. But there is different business enough in the world, for every individual of the human race, let their inclinations, abilities, and advantages, be what they will. But,

3. To serve our generation by the will of God implies, that we abstain from every thing that is contrary to the will of God. God has made known his will to us, partly by the light of nature: *for when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shews the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the mean while, either accusing or excusing one another.* But God has discovered his will to us, more clearly, by an express revelation from heaven. *For holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy ghost.* Whatsoever therefore is contrary to the will of God, revealed either by the light of nature, or by his written word, should be carefully avoided by us. *For how can we do such great wickedness as to sin against God?* Tho' it is true, that some sins are more heinous, and aggravated, than some others, yet every sin deserves eternal damnation. For when men commit sin, they transgress the law of God, and thereby trample under foot, the authority of the law-giver, and implicitly say, *let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us. He that offends then in one point, is guilty of all.* We must therefore, *cleanse our selves from all filthiness, of the flesh, and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. For this is the will of God, even our sanctification. What I say unto you,* (says our Saviour,) *I say unto all, watch.* We must watch over our hearts, that we may *keep*

our hearts, with all diligence, because out of them are the issues of life. We must watch over our tongues, *that we may refrain our tongues from evil, and our lips that they speak no guile.* And we must watch over our lives, that we may *exercise ourselves, in keeping consciences, void of offence, toward God and toward men.* For it is a truth, that will remain more firm, and unshaken than the pillars of Heaven, or the foundation of the earth; *that without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.* I add,

4. To serve our generation by the will of God, implies that we diligently, and faithfully, discharge every duty of life. Christianity is a practical science; we are required not only to eschew evil, but to do good. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly; that they which have believed in God, might be careful, to maintain good works; these things are good and profitable unto men.* The duties which we owe more immediately unto God, to our neighbors, and to ourselves, must be faithfully discharged by us. We owe all possible love, and obedience to God, as our creator, preserver, and redeemer. We must therefore love him, fear him, trust him, delight in him, as our portion and happiness; be thankful for his mercies, humbled under his frowns, and devote our bodies, and souls to his service. And the external duties of his worship, should be faithfully discharged by us. Can any man be said to serve his generation by the will of God, who neglects to pray to God in secret? or neglects family prayer, or makes no conscience of absenting from God's publick worship?

There are duties likewise, that we ought to perform to our fellow men. *We should do to others as we would that they should do unto us; and love our neighbors as ourselves.* And accordingly, *we should put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.* And it is our duty

to endeavor to promote the health and comfort of our own bodies; but more especially to secure the eternal happiness of our precious and immortal souls. *For what would it profit a man if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* But there are relative duties that must be performed by them who would serve their generation by the will of God. Magistrates *must be just, ruling in the fear of God. That they may be terrors to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well.* Ministers must *feed the flock of God, which* is committed to them, *taking the oversight thereof, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.* The people are required to *obey them that have the rule over them, and submit themselves, for they watch for their souls, as they that must give account.* Husbands and wives should *behave towards each other as being heirs together of the grace of life, that their prayers be not hindered.* And parents and masters of families should *walk within their house with a perfect heart, and bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* And they should render to their servants *what is just and equal.* And children and servants should honor and obey their parents and masters, as in the Lord. But,

5. To serve our generation by the will of God, implies that we receive the holy Scriptures as the only rule of our faith as well as of our practice. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.* And, therefore, *to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.* It appears wonderful that there are so many sects and parties in the Christian Church; and so many gross errors that are propagated and supported by men of corrupt minds; tho' they pretend to own the divine authority of the holy Scripture. It is not because the doctrines of the gospel are not

clearly revealed in the holy Scriptures that men run into so many pernicious errors. But it is owing partly to the god of this world, *who blinds the minds of them who believe not lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ would shine unto them*, and partly, to the pride and prejudices of their own hearts. If men were honestly disposed to search the Scriptures with impartiality, *they would know the truth and the truth would make* them free. But when men embrace dangerous errors, they are very fond of making proselytes, and *of drawing away disciples after them;* and, therefore, instead of serving their generation by the will of God, they are serving Satan and their own lusts. I add once more,

6. To serve our generation by the will of God, implies that we have all our dependance upon the merits of Christ for our justification, and upon his grace to sanctify us, and make *us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.* This is evident, because without Christ we can do nothing that is agreeable to the will of God. It is no less evident that we must be justified by the merits of Christ's active and passive obedience imputed to us by faith, because the righteousness by which we are justified, must be commensurate with all the demands of the moral law. The law is a transcript of the divine perfections, and therefore immutable. *Heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or one tittle of the law shall pass, until all be fulfilled.* But Christ as our surety and mediator, obeyed the law, and became the end of the law, for righteousness, to every one that believeth. And by his sufferings and death, he answered the penal demands of it. *For he himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree: And he who knew no sin was made to sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Being interested, therefore, in Christ by faith, the law can lay nothing to our charge; *since it is God that justifieth.*

But we depend as much upon Christ to sanctify us, as to justify us. For we can as easily justify ourselves before

God, as we can *take away our own stony hearts, and give ourselves hearts of flesh, and create ourselves anew in Christ Jesus, unto good works that we may live in them. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. And of his fullness we must all receive, even grace for grace.* But, I come,

2. To shew the evidences of this truth, that men can never obtain a better, and a more honorable character, than by serving their generation, by the will of God.

Now this appears evident, because such men are conformed to the image of God. God is always at work. Our Saviour said, *my Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* He is continually doing us good. *He is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all his works. All eyes wait upon him, and he giveth them their meat in due season.* How can we therefore obtain a better, and a more honorable character, than to *be followers of God as dear children.* Again,

Such men as serve their generation by the will of God, imitate the example of Jesus Christ. *He has left us an example that we should follow his steps. He went about doing good to the bodies* and souls of men. He spent his whole life in serving his generation by the will of God. *And as he was delivered for our offences, and is raised again for our justification; all power in heaven and in earth is committed unto him.* So all the blessings of God's providence are dispensed through his hands; and all the blessings of God's grace come from him as from the fountain, *for he is head over all things to his Church.* It is the highest honor, therefore, that we can attain to in this world, or the world to come, to be like Jesus Christ. What can we aspire after of equal importance with being *changed into the same image of Jesus Christ, from glory to glory, even by the spirit of the Lord?* Moreover,

The elders, by serving their generation by the will of God, *obtained a good report.* Their memories have by this, been

embalmed to all generations to the end of time. They obtained more than true honor, *by working righteousness, than they did by subduing kingdoms, stopping the mouths of lions, or by quenching the violence of fire.* David's name is remembered upon this account, more than for his being a mighty man of valor, and a great conqueror. Solomon observes, *the memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot.* Men are very fond of perpetuating their names, tho' they take very wrong measures, to do it. So the man that burnt the temple at Ephesus, did it, he said, that his name might be remembered.

Alexander, Cæsar, Tamarlane, and other mighty conquerors, have left a great name. But for what? But for being the greatest plagues to the world. *A good name is as precious ointment poured forth:* But this is obtained in no way, but by the practice of virtue, and religion. *For the righteous, shall be in everlasting remembrance.* But I come to observe,

II.—That good men must die, as well as others. Death is common to all men. *As dieth the wise man, so dieth the fool.* There is no man *that hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit; neither hath he power, in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war.* The natural cause of death, is the weakness, and imbecility, of our natures. Our bodies are made of jarring elements, and will die in a way of natural perspiration; if not by violent diseases, or by external casualities. As our bodies are compounded, of so many minute different parts; and as health, and life, depend upon a proper balance, between the solids, and fluids; we have reason to wonder, that our lives are continued so long, rather than that we die so soon.

The moral cause of death is sin. Death is a legacy, that is left us by the sin of our first parents. *For as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* And hence no age,

no condition, no circumstance of life, is free from the arrest of *the king of terrors.* Death sometimes enters, into the secret inclosures of nature, and turns the womb into a grave. Young and tender infants, are snatched from the arms, of their fond parents; and as they see the light, they are carried to the shades of death. *Some die in youth, while their breasts are full of milk, and their bones are moistened with marrow.* And some in a more confirmed age; *for every man in his best estate, is altogether vanity.*

And there are but few, that live to old age. And as there is no age, so no condition of life, will prevent our going the way of all the earth. Death enters into the palaces of princes, as well as the cottages of beggars; and will treat them with no more complaisance. *I said ye are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High, said the psalmist; but ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.* And those who excel in grace, and holiness, must resign their breath, as well as the most abandoned sinners. There are many reasons, why good men should not be exempted from death, notwithstanding the redemption of Christ. To keep them humble, and mortified to this world. David desired *to know his end,* that he might know his frailty. We see that we are of the earth earthy. That we had our original from the earth, and therefore, must return to it again. So God said to Adam, *in the sweat of thy face, thou shalt eat thy bread; 'til thou return to the ground, for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.* Again,

To make them the more diligent to prepare for this great event. As they *knew not the day of their death,* so they know that this is the only time, allotted them, to do the work of the day. Solomon says, *whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whether thou goest.* And our Saviour said, *I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work.* This

was a powerful motive, to excite the Apostle Peter, to the discharge of his duty. *Yea, I think it meet (said he), as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance; knowing that shortly, I must put off this, my tabernacle; even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.* Again,

To give God's people an opportunity, to glorify him by their death. So it is said, that Christ spake unto Peter, *signifying by what death, he should glorify God.* Many have been called to glorify God, by dying for Christ, and a good conscience. And in this case, the blood of the martyrs, has been the feed of the Church.

It is a great confirmation, of the truth of Christianity, that they who were appointed to be witnesses of Christ's resurrection, sealed the truth of their testimony, with their blood. *They did not count their lives dear unto themselves; so that they might finish their course with joy.* And in the time of the reformation, the cruel persecutions, that the reformers suffered, was a great means of spreading the reformed religion. But, if we are not called to pass thro' the red sea (a sea of blood), in order, to our entering into the heavenly Canaan; yet we may glorify God, by the manner of our death. We may recommend religion to others, by our willingness to depart, that we may be with Christ, by our patience, and resignation, to the will of God; and by leaving them our dying counsels, and exhortations.

Another reason, why good men must die, is that they may be entirely free from sinning. We read, *that he that is, dead is freed from sin.* We are but in an imperfect state, while we remain in this world. *In many things, we offend all.* But good men *groan, being burdened.* They long for deliverance, *from the body of this death.* Again,

Another reason, why good men must die, is that they may rest, from all the troubles, and afflictions, that they are exercised with in this world. *Man is born to trouble, as the sparks* fly upward. This world is like a troubled sea, one wave of

affliction follows another, *as the clouds return after the rain.* And good men must have their share, in the troubles of life. Our Saviour said to his disciples, *in this world ye shall have tribulation.* While here, they are under discipline, and as they are not perfectly freed from sinning, so their heavenly Father, thinks it necessary *to visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, his loving kindness, will he not utterly take from them: nor suffer his faithfulness to fail.* Again,

Another reason why they must die, is that their souls may go into an inconceivable state of joy, and bliss. Blessed are *the dead, which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.* But, I shall consider this more fully under the next general head.

And therefore add,

It is necessary that they should die, that at the resurrection, their vile bodies should *be changed and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body.* The Apostle observes, *that what is sowed, is not quickened except it die. And that God giveth it a body, as it pleaseth him; and to every seed its own body.* Our bodies, as they are composed of such gross materials, of flesh, and blood, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, until they are purified, and spiritualized, and made fit for the habitation, *of spirits made perfect.* But when Christ shall appear, *we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* And, lastly,

Good men must die, that they may be conformed to their head. *Christ is head over all things to his Church; and all true believers are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.* And as the head died; so the members must die too. Christ first endured the cross, before he enjoyed the crown. He *humbled himself and became obedient unto death, before he entered into his glory.* So we must be humbled, before we are exalted: must die that we may live.

But, although one event happens to all men; and there be

no external difference, between the death of the righteous, and the death of the wicked: Yet there is a vast difference. *The wicked is driven away, in his wickedness; but the righteous hath hope in his death. For as much as the children are partakers of flesh, and blood; Christ also himself likewise, took part of the same, that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death, are all their life time subject to bondage.* So that *for them to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

But this brings me to observe,

III.—That they who serve their generation, by the will of God; when they die, sleep in Jesus, and rest from their labors. So *David, after he had served his generation by the will of God, fell on sleep.* The death of good men, may very fitly be compared to sleep; because when men sleep, all the cares and concerns of the world, are laid aside; so when men die, they have no more concern, with the things of this world. *Their breath goeth forth, they return to their earth, in that very day their thoughts perish.* Again, when men sleep, they rest from their labor: so, when men die, they rest from all the troubles, and afflictions of this life. The grave is a place of rest. *There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest.* But the death of the righteous, may more especially, be compared to sleep, in this respect; that when men sleep, it is that they may be refreshed, and may awake, more fitted to perform the duties, and services that they are called to. So good men die, that they may be more fitted, for the service of God. *Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake to everlasting life. Our body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.*

But the soul does not (as some imagine), sleep until the resurrection. The immortality of the soul, was generally believed, by the heathen world; and is evidently revealed in

the holy Scriptures. Our souls will be in a state of activity, while our bodies will be sleeping in the dust of the earth. The soul of Lazarus, *was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.* And our Saviour said, *to the thief on the cross, this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. The Apostle desired to depart, that he might be with Christ.* And he says, *for we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle, were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* And this truth is revealed in the Old Testament as well as in the New. Solomon observes, *that whenever the silver cord is loosed—then shall the dust, return to the earth as it was, and the spirit, to God who gave it.* The souls of true believers, will be *presented faultless, before the presence of God's glory. with exceeding joy.* The glory of God's attributes; of his decrees; of his word; of his works; of creation, providence, and grace, will be unvailed. *And they will see as they are seen, and know as they are known;* when they shall stand in his presence, *where is fullness of joy, and pleasures forevermore.* They will be with Christ. They will *behold the King in his beauty. And the lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.* They will be *joined to the general assembly, and Church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and be employed in the most delightful employment; serving God, day and night, in his temple, and they will go no more out.* And to crown their felicity, they will be advanced to an high degree, of personal perfection. They will be holy as *God is holy; and pure as Christ is pure.* And their knowledge, will be equal to their moral endowments. *When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part, shall be done away. Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now we know in part, but then we shall know, even as we are known.*

But I come now to make some improvement of the subject. And,

1. We may learn, from what has been delivered, that the more diligently, and faithfully, men serve their generation, by the will of God; the more distinguishing their reward will be. As there are different degrees of grace; so there will be different degrees of glory. Every vessel will be full; but some vessels will be more capacious than others. Our Saviour in the parable of the talents, lets us know, that he, who improves his talents well, shall receive a proportionable reward, and he says, *he that receiveth a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward. And he that receiveth a righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward.* So, we read, *that they that be wise, shall shine, as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.* And *one star* (we are told), *differs from another star in glory.* But,

2. We may learn how much it concerns us to improve our time, and talents, in the service of God and our generation; before we fall on sleep. We have a great work to do, and but little time to do it in. Our souls must be renewed by divine grace. *Except a man be born again; he can never see the kingdom of God.* And when we are at first savingly converted to God; our work is so far from being done, that it is but just begun. We are *but new born babes, and must receive the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby.* We are entered into a militant state, and *we must fight, not as one that beateth the air; but to keep under our bodies; and bring them into subjection.* Our lusts must be mortified, and we must live in newness of life. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood only, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* And, therefore, *we should take the whole armor of God; that we may be able to stand, in the evil day, and having done all, may stand.*

And we have many duties to perform, publick, and private. Every condition of life; every relation that we sustain; every

employment that we are engaged in; and every person that we converse with, calls for a new succession of duty. *And forgetting the things, that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before; we should press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* That *we may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

We must be soon called *to give an account of our stewardships, when we must be here no longer stewards.* We must all be judged, *according to our works. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them their meat in due season. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing. But, and if that evil servant, shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants; and to eat, and drink with the drunken. The Lord of that servant, shall come in a day when he looketh not for him; and in an hour, that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder* (that is, he shall divide his body, and soul asunder); *and appoint him his portion among hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* But,

3. We may learn that the removal of pious, and useful men by death, is a great frown of Providence. *Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail, from among the children of men.* Tho' godly men may have lived to a good old age, and may have been gathered in, *as a shock of corn in its season;* yet the death of the ancient, and honorable, is spoke of in Scripture, as a judgment upon the people of the Jews. Tho' as to themselves, they are removed in mercy. *The righteous perisheth and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away; none considering that the righteous is taken away, from the evil to come. They shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds; each one walking in his uprightness.* Little do wicked men consider, what advantages they receive from the godly. They *stand in the gap,*

and keep off judgments. The world stands, for the sake of the elect. If there had been but ten righteous persons in Sodom, God would have spared the city for their sakes. It is a certain argument, that a people are near to destruction, when God will not hear the prayers of his servants on their behalf.

This was the case of the Jews. God said to the prophet Jeremiah: *pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry, nor prayer, for them, neither make intercession to me, for I will not hear thee.* But,

4. We may learn that the example of those who have served their generation by the will of God; ought to be imitated by those who survive. *That we may be followers of them, who through faith and patience, do inherit the promises.* We have the example, of *a great cloud of witnesses, whose faith we should follow; considering the end of their conversation.* But, especially, we should imitate the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand, of the throne of God.* But blessed be God, we have had examples, in these times of degeneracy, of men, who have been eminently serviceable in their generation; whose virtues we should follow.

And amongst others, the honorable Person, whose remains are now to be laid under the clods of the valley, has left an example, of one who did worthily in his day and generation.

He descended from a reputable family; and the Father of Spirits; endowed him with uncommon natural abilities. And as he had the advantage of a liberal education, he became truly a great man. But this was not the best part of his character. A person may be a great man; may have a strong natural genius; and may make a great figure in the learned world; and yet the one thing needful, to perfect his character, may be wanting. He may be after all, a child of

wrath and an heir of hell. But Governor FITCH was a religious man. He made the holy Scriptures, the rule of his conduct, both in his private and public life. He was found in the faith, which was once delivered to the saints. It is true, in his younger years he had somewhat of a fondness for some Armenian tenets, which he received, as it were by tradition. For while he was connected with the college, that great revolution happened; when the rector, and one of the tutors, and two of the neighboring ministers, embraced the Episcopal persuasion; and went home to England for orders. It is not so much to be wondered at therefore, if he had a favorable opinion, of some of the doctrines, that are propagated, by some divines of that persuasion. But he was effectually detached from those doctrines. For he was experimentally convinced of his own impotency (as he himself informed me); and learned to rely, upon the mere mercy and grace of God, in Jesus Christ, for justification and eternal life. But although he depended, upon the merits of Christ's active, and passive obedience, for his justification before God, and to give him a title to all the blessings of the covenant of grace; yet he was convinced, of the necessity of being holy, in all manner of conversation; that he might be *made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.* And accordingly, he became an ornament, to the religion that he professed. He was a strict observer of the Lord's-day, and kept up family religion, that he *and his house, might serve the Lord.* He steadily attended upon God's public worship, and upon all the ordinances of religion, as they are administered in God's house of prayer. And when he was so far out of health, that others would have thought, that he might have been excused, from attending in public; yet he would not excuse himself. And he observed to me, that he found himself better, and more relieved, when in such a case, by attending upon public worship, than if he had tarried at home. The study and practice of the law, was his principal busi-

ness in life; and he became eminent in his profession, and accordingly, he was appointed by the General Assembly, to revise, and new model the laws of this Government; and fit them for a new edition, which he effected to so good purpose, that they are now justly esteemed, by gentlemen in Great Britain, who are acquainted with them, to be the best code of plantation laws that was ever published. They are expressed, in a very plain, and intelligible manner; and yet very concisely. This work has been attempted before, (as I am informed) but could never be accomplished, to the satisfaction of the General Assembly, until it was done by his masterly hand.

He was soon called to the principal posts of government, in this colony, by the free election of the people; in all which he served his generation, with wisdom and fidelity. His justice and impartiality, were applauded by everybody, in the execution of his office: as the Chief Judge of the Superior Court, he had an happy talent, in committing a cause to the jury. Particularly, in summing up the evidence, and in putting the case upon a right issue; that the jury might know what was the law; and that justice might have free course. Soon after he was called, to the principal seat of government, in this colony, it was a time of great distress. A cruel, and bloody war, broke out with one of the most powerful nations in Europe; and with the heathen savages in the land. And this country became a principal seat of the war. We had wars, and rumors of wars Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after, those things that were coming upon the earth. The war for some years, was very unsuccessful, and this colony in particular, exerted themselves to the utmost of their power, year after year; and yet nothing was done to any effect, to bring the war to an issue. But yet the Governor managed with so much prudence, that the people persevered in their endeavors; until the God of armies, was pleased to prosper the British

arms, and bring the war to an happy conclusion. But after the war was brought to an end; he yet stood high in the esteem of the people, and accordingly, was unanimously chosen Governor, from year to year, until the unhappy Stamp Act, put this colony, as well as the whole continent, into terrible confusion. The Governor was obliged by the Act of Parliament, to take an oath, to assist the stamp officers, in the execution of their office. And although everybody was sensible, that there was no way, that he could avoid taking the oath; yet upon his taking it, the people were in such a ruffle; that the choice went against him, by a majority of the freemen; to the great grief, of a great part of the colony. He bore his dismission, with great patience, and resignation. I never heard him complain, of the ingratitude, or injustice of the people in their conduct toward him. After this he lived a retired life, and employed his time chiefly in reading. And it has been thought, that his reading so much, and his want of bodily exercise, have been the cause of the unusual ailment, that put an end to his valuable life. He was taken at first with a giddiness, and sickness at his stomach; which was followed by a syncopy, and loss of memory. And although he continued above a month, after he was first taken ill; yet, there were but few intervals, in which he appeared to be quite sensible. At one of those intervals, in which he was sensible, that death was approaching, he expressed a strong hope of everlasting happiness. Upon his desire that I should pray with him; I asked him what he desired that I should pray for. He answered, that he might have a quick passage to glory. After prayer; I asked him what apprehensions he had, of appearing before God the judge of all; as he looked upon himself to be near his end. He answered that he depended upon the righteousness of Christ. But he is now gone, where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest. He has been an honor to this colony; and more especially, to this

town, the place of his birth, and residence; and his death has made an awful breach in this church, and society.

We ought to be humbled, under the frown of God's providence; and be *followers of him, so far as he was a follower of Christ:* that we may meet in a better world, and join together, in *singing anthems, and hallelujahs, to him that setteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever.* But,

5. We may learn, that the surviving relations of such as have served their generation, by the will of God, have no reason *to mourn as without hope.* Mourning for our departed friends, and relatives, is without doubt a duty. Thus Abraham mourned for the death of his beloved wife. And thus our Saviour expressed his affection, for his departed friend Lazarus, by his tears. A stoical apathy, instead of being a virtue, is unnatural stupidity. *To despise the chastening of the Lord,* discovers a worse temper of mind, *than to faint, when we are rebuked of Him.* But we should use moderation in mourning, as well as in rejoicing. *I was dumb,* (said David) *I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it.* And Job quieted himself, with this consideration, that *the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord.* God aims at the good of his people, in all the afflictions and trials, they meet with in the world. *We have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather, be in subjection to the Father of Spirits and live. For they verily for a few days, chastised us after their own pleasure; but be for our profit; that we might be partakers of His holiness.* The path of affliction; is the road to heaven, which the people of God have walked in, from the beginning of the world. If our trials have their proper effect to make us more submissive to the will of God; wean us from the world; imbitter sin to us; make us more compassionate to others; and quicken us in our preparation, *for that rest, that remains for the people of God*; we shall have reason to say, as David, *that it is good for us, that we have been afflicted.*

2. Use, by way of exhortation. Be persuaded my brethren in whatever station of life you are, to endeavor to serve your generation by the will of God, before you fall on sleep. God has made you rational creatures, capable of moral goverment. You are distinguished, from the beasts of the field, and from the birds of the air. And he has been pleased, to send his own Son into the world; *who suffered for our sins, the just, for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.* And you enjoy the gospel, and the means of grace. You have God's written word, *that by patience, and comfort of the scriptures you might have hope.* You have the ministry of reconciliation, and the sacraments of the New Testament, *in which Christ is evidently set forth; as though crucified among you.* And you likewise enjoy, many outward mercies, above many others in the world. *The lines are fallen to you in pleasant places, and you have a goodly heritage.* Consider you are accountable, for all the advantages, that you enjoy. And you must be quickly called to give an account of your stewardship, when you must be here no longer stewards. Your time is short and uncertain. You have more reason to wonder that you are alive than that others are dead. Endeavor therefore to work while the day lasts, for the night cometh when no man can work.

DEED FROM RUNCKINGHEAGE.

THIS Indenture, made the 15th of February, 1651, Between RUNCKINGHEAGE, PIAMIKIN, and MAGISE, and TOWNTOM, and WINNAPUCKE, and MAGUSHETOWES, and CONCKUSKENO, and WAMPASUM, and SASSEAKUN, and RUNCKENUNNETT, and POKESSAKE. and SHOAKECUM, and SOANAMATUM, and PRODAX, and MATUMPUN, and COCKENOE-DE-Long-Island, Indians, of the one Partie, and RICHARD WEB, NATHANIEL ELI, MATTHEWE MARVIN, senr, NATHANIEL RICHARDS, ISACKE MORE, THOMAS FITCH THOMAS HALES, RICHARD HOLMSTEAD, RICHARD SEAMER, RALPH KEELER, MATTHEW MARVEN, junior, NATHANIEL HAIES, EDWARD CHURCH, JOSEPH FITCH, Planters of Norwake, for the use and behalfe of said Town, WITNESSETH, that the said Runckinheage, and Piamik, (&c., &c.) * * * * HAVE, and in and for the consideration of Thirtie Fathum of Wampum, Tenn Kettles, Fifteen Coates, Tenn payr of Stockings, Tenn Knifes, Tenn Hookes, Twenty Pipes, Tenn Muckes, Tenn needles, to them in hand paid, HAVE, and Every of them, for themselves and their heyers, Granted, Bargained, Sold, assigned, Enfeoffed, and confirmed; and by these presents doth Bargain, grant, sell, enfeoffe, assigne, sett over, and confirme, unto the said said Richard Web, (&c., &c.) * * * all their lands called and known by the name of Runckinheage, Rooaton, or by whatsover name or names the same is called or known, Lying and bounded on the East upon ye land purchased of Captain Patriarke, so called, on the West bounded with the Brook called Pampaskeshanke, which said Brook and passage, the Bounds West, Extendeth up into the Country by marked Trees; and so far as the said Runckinheage, and the rest above mentioned, hath any Right and proprietie; and the aforesaid Land bounded with the Brook called as aforesaid Pampaskeshanke, from

the aforesaid passage and path down along to the Sea. And the aforesaid Land bounded on the South with the Sea; and on the North the Moehakes Country; with all the Islands, Trees, pastures, meadinge, water, water courses, Rights, members, and Appurtenances whatsoever, To HAVE AND TO HOLD, and quietly and peaceably injoy, all the aforesaid lands, &c. * * * unto the aforesaid Richard Web, &c. * * * * * and to their heyers forever. And the aforesaid Runckinheage and Piamikin, and Magise, and Townetom, Winnepucke, Magushetowes, Conkuskenow, Wampasum, Sasseakun, Runckenunnutt, Pekessake, Shoakecum, Soanamatum, Prodax, Matumpun, Cockenoe-de-Longe-Island, Do by these presents, acknowledge to have received the aforesaid Thirtie fathum of Wampum, &c. * * in full satisfaction. In witness whereof the above said parties have for themselves, and every of them, sett to their hands the day and year above written to this present Indenture.

Signed and delivered in the presence of

STEPHEN BECKWITH,
SAMUEL LUMES,
SAMUEL ELY.

his
Runckin ⋈ heage,
mark.

his
Sassa ⋈ kun,
mark.

his
Piamikin, ⋈
mark.

his
Magi ⋈ se,
mark.

his
Conkus ⋈ kenoe,
mark.

his
Winna ⋈ pucke,
mark.

his
Sasse ⋈ a kum,
mark.

his
Towne ⋈ Tom,
mark.

his
Wam ⋈ passum,
mark.

his
Pro ⋈ dax,
mark.

Runc ⋈ kemunutt.

Pokassake, ⋈

Recorded February y° 24th, 1708-9.

Pr. JOHN COPP, Recordr.

BY THE HONORABLE

THOMAS FITCH,

Governor of His Majesty's English Colony of Connecticut, in New England.

A PROCLAMATION

FOR A DAY OF PUBLIC FASTING AND PRAYER.

CONSIDERING the scorching Drought the Summer past: The early frost in Autumn, whereby the latter Harvest, in various parts, was cut short: The close, severe and expensive, Winter following, whereby our substance hath been still more diminished: and other corrective Dispensations of Divine Providence, wherein it hath pleased Almighty God, to testify his Righteous Displeasure against a sinful and unthankful People: That Carelessness and indifference about the important concerns of Religion: That Profaneness, Uncharitableness, Uncleanness, disregard of the Lord's Day, and the special duties of it, and other vices and Immoralities visible among us which are so highly provoking to a Holy God; and which have a threatening aspect on the land: Considering also our Dependence on Him, whose open hand satisfieth the desire of every living thing; for deliverance from evils, and for the Bestowment and Continuation of all the favors we need; whereby we are admonished, and called upon, to humble ourselves before God, and to turn unto Him, with all our hearts; and by Fasting, and Prayer, to wait upon Him for the Blessings of His Goodness:

I have thought fit, by and with the Advice of the Council, to appoint, and do hereby appoint that Wednesday the Seventeenth day of April next, be observed throughout this Colony, as a Day of public Fasting and Prayer; exhorting both Ministers and People, of every Denomination, with becoming Seriousness, Devotion, and Solemnity, to unite in keeping said FAST; abasing themselves before the Most High, under an affecting sense of the Rebukes and Chastisements of Heaven, wherein it hath pleased the Lord in Righteousness to visit his People; And with full purpose of Heart to turn unto him by Repentance and Amendment of Life.

Likewise to offer up devout and fervent prayers to Almighty God, for our Sovereign Lord King *GEORGE* the Third, for our Gracious Queen *CHARLOTTE*, their Royal Highnesses *GEORGE* Prince of Wales, the Princess *DOWAGER* of Wales, and all the Royal Family: That God would be pleased, from Time to Time, to direct the King's Councils; succeed his Negociations; grant his Favours and Blessings to the British Dominions in America; smile on this Colony; give us Favour at the Court of Great Britain, and bless our Agency there; in much Mercy continue to us our most valuable privileges and Immunities, both Civil and Religious, intire; dispose his People to a thankful Improvement of them; bless our civil Administrations; abundantly succeed the Means of Grace and Education; pour out the efficatious Influences of the Divine Spirit more plentifully upon us; avert those Evils our Sins have deserved; grant us a Spirit of Repentance and Reformation; favour us with Health in our Habitations; advance the Springing of the Year; cause the Earth to yield its Increase; save from Blasts, Droughts, and other desolating Judgments; order the Seasons in Mercy; reserve for us the appointed Weeks of Harvest; bless us in the Labour of

our Hands, and in all our Interests, and crown the Year with Goodness; grant that the Knowledge of the true God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, may be more extensively promulgated through this Land, and be received in the Purity thereof; and that the Lord our God would incline and enable us to improve the various Dispensations of his Providence, to his own Honour and Glory.

AND ALL SERVILE LABOUR IS FORBID ON SAID DAY.

GIVEN under my Hand in Norwalk, the Eleventh Day of March, in the Fifth Year of the Reign of Our Sovereign Lord GEORGE the Third of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King Defender of the Faith, &c., Annoque Domini 1765.

THO'S FITCH.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

NEW LONDON: Printed by Timothy Green, Printer to the Colony of Connecticut, 1765.

Sir Thomas Fitch, of Eltham, in Kent County, England, was created a Baronet by the King of England, by Patent No. 905. He was a Judge of much distinction, and was mentioned as such by Sir William Blackstone.

William Fitch, a descendant of Baron Fitch, was for a long time a member of Parliament.

Thomas Fitch; lineal descendant of Baron Fitch, died in Braintree, Essex County, England, leaving a widow and several sons, who came to this country between the years 1634 and 1638, having sold the family estate, which was situated

at Birch, Essex County. They arrived in this country as follows: Jeremiah Fitch, 1634; John Fitch and James Fitch, in the ship "Defiance," and landed at Boston, Mass., 1635; Richard Fitch, 1685; Joseph Fitch, 1635; Samuel Fitch and Zechery Fitch, 1635; Thomas Fitch, 1639.

Thomas Fitch and his brother Joseph Fitch, settled in Norwalk, Conn. Were planters, and with their neighbors, purchased a tract of land of Runckingheage and other Indian chiefs, by deed dated February 15, 1651. In 1665, Thomas Fitch was the wealthiest citizen of Norwalk. From him, in a line of three generations, each bearing the same surname, descended Thomas Fitch, who held many positions of trust, and was Judge, Chief-Justice, Lieut-Governor and Governor 46 years, being Governor of the Colony from 1754 to 1766. He graduated at Yale College in 1721. Was an eloquent speaker, an accomplished scholar, able Jurist, an elegant, accomplished, as well as a Christian gentleman. Was appointed by the General Assembly to revise and remodel the laws of Connecticut, which were considered by English jurists as the best code of Colonial laws that had ever been published.

He held the pen of a ready writer. His proclamations are considered fine specimens of State papers, the purity of language of which our modern Governors would do well to imitate. His correspondence with the Governor of the State of New York, as will be seen by reference to the Documentary and Colonial History, was ably conducted, and like other Colonial Governors, affixed, as a seal to most of his correspondence and State papers, the coat of arms of his family.

He left a large family of children. Colonel Thomas Fitch, who commanded the four New England Regiments of whom Yankee Doodle was composed and sung, being the eldest; one of his daughters, Mary Fitch, married Moses Rogers, one of their descendants being the elegant and accomplished Mrs. Col. Wm. P. Van Rensellaer, of the City of New York.

Governor Fitch died July 18, 1774, in the 78th year of his age. Was buried at Norwalk. His residence is still standing, having received some alterations. The inscription on his tombstone is as follows:

"The Honorable Thomas Fitch, Esq. Eminent and distinguished among mortals for great abilities, large acquirements, and a virtuous character; a clear, strong, sedate mind, and an accurate, extensive acquaintance with law and civil government; a happy talent of presiding, close application and strict fidelity in the discharge of important trusts, no less than for his employments by the voice of the people in the chief offices of State, and at the head of the Colony. Having served his generation by the will of God, fell asleep July 18th, Anno Domini, 1774, in the 78th year of his age."

The descendants of the Governor, like those of his brothers, have to a great extent, adopted the professions of law, medicine and divinity, and have intermarried with most of the prominent families in Connecticut. The Rev. Moses Dickinson, who preached the funeral sermon of the Governor, was from New Jersey, graduated at Yale College in 1717, was installed pastor of the first Church of Christ in Norwalk in 1727. Was a minister 51 years; died May 1, 1778, aged 83.

Among the descendants of Joseph Fitch, of Norwalk, who was one of the great uncles of Governor Fitch, was John Fitch, the inventor of the steamboat, who was born in East Windsor, Conn., January 21, 1743, and was buried at Bardstown, Ky.

PROCLAMATION FOR A FAST IN 1756.

From the "Historical Magazine," Vol. 9, p. 214.

WE have been handed by our esteemed friend, HON. JOHN FITCH, of the City of New York, a lineal descendant of the old Norwalk Governor, the following loyal Proclamation to the good people of the Colony of Connecticut. The "original document" is a curiosity, and is, of course, a carefully preserved and much cherished memento in the Records of the State of Connecticut:

"BY THE HONOURABLE

"THOMAS FITCH, Esq.;

"Governor of his Majesty's English Colony of Connecticut,
"in New England, in America.

"*A PROCLAMATION*

"For a day of public Fasting and Prayer.

"CONSIDERING the manifest Tokens of divine Dis-
"pleasure against our Nation, and Land, in permitting
"them to be engaged in a dangerous WAR, with a very
"powerful Enemy, the Seat of which is so much in
"America; and the distressing calamities attending it; the
"Advantages the Enemy have been allowed to gain over
"us, not only by destroying the frontier Towns, and Settle-
"ments, Killing and Captivating great Numbers of our
"Soldiery and Inhabitants; but even taking some of our
"strong Holds and Fortresses, and thereby Strengthening
"themselves with much of our Artillery, war like Stores
"and Provisions. Considering also that our military Pre-
"parations and Attempts, for securing the British Interest,
"and Safety of this Land, have not hitherto been successful
"according to our Hopes against the encroaching and bar-
"barous Enemy Whereby our Treasure has been greatly
"Exhausted, and the Land much weakened. Considering

"likewise the Sickness sent into the Army this present "Year; and that under all these Distresses, it hath pleased "a righteous GOD to cut short so much of the former Har- "vest; and many other Tokens of divine Displeasure; "whereby we are admonished to humble ourselves before a "holy GOD, from whom all our afflictions come, and on "whom we are constantly dependent for Help and for Sal- "vation.

"I have therefore thought fit, by and with the Advice "of the Council, and at the desire of the Representatives "in General Court assembled, to appoint, and do hereby "appoint Thursday, the seventh day of October next, to "be religiously Observed as a Day of public Fasting, and "Prayer throughout this Colony, earnestly exhorting both "Ministers, and People in their religious Societies, deeply "to humble themselves before a Righteous GOD, and un- "feignedly to repent of all those Sins, and Iniquities, "whereby the LORD is provoked to Anger against us.

"And to offer up fervent Prayers and Supplications to "the LORD of Hosts, that he would protect and defend our "Nation; bless the King's Majesty, and all the Royal "Family; direct the King's Councils; go forth with his "Fleets, and Armies: Crown them with Victory and Suc- "cess; and bring our Enemies to just and reasonable Terms "of Peace; that he would take care of us in this Land, "bless the several Governments in it; protect our Sea- "Coasts, and defend our frontier Towns, and Settlements; "that He would be with our Army, preserve them from "Sickness, save them from the Sword of the Enemy, cover "their Heads on the Day of Battle, and Crown them with "Victory and Success; And that GOD would restore Peace "to our Borders; save us from those desolating Judgments "we have reason to fear; pour out upon us a Spirit of "Prayer, Reformation, and Amendment, and excite us to "suitable Behaviour under all the Dispensations of His "Providence and Grace.

"And all servile Labour is hereby strictly forbidden on "said day.

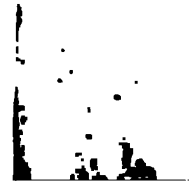
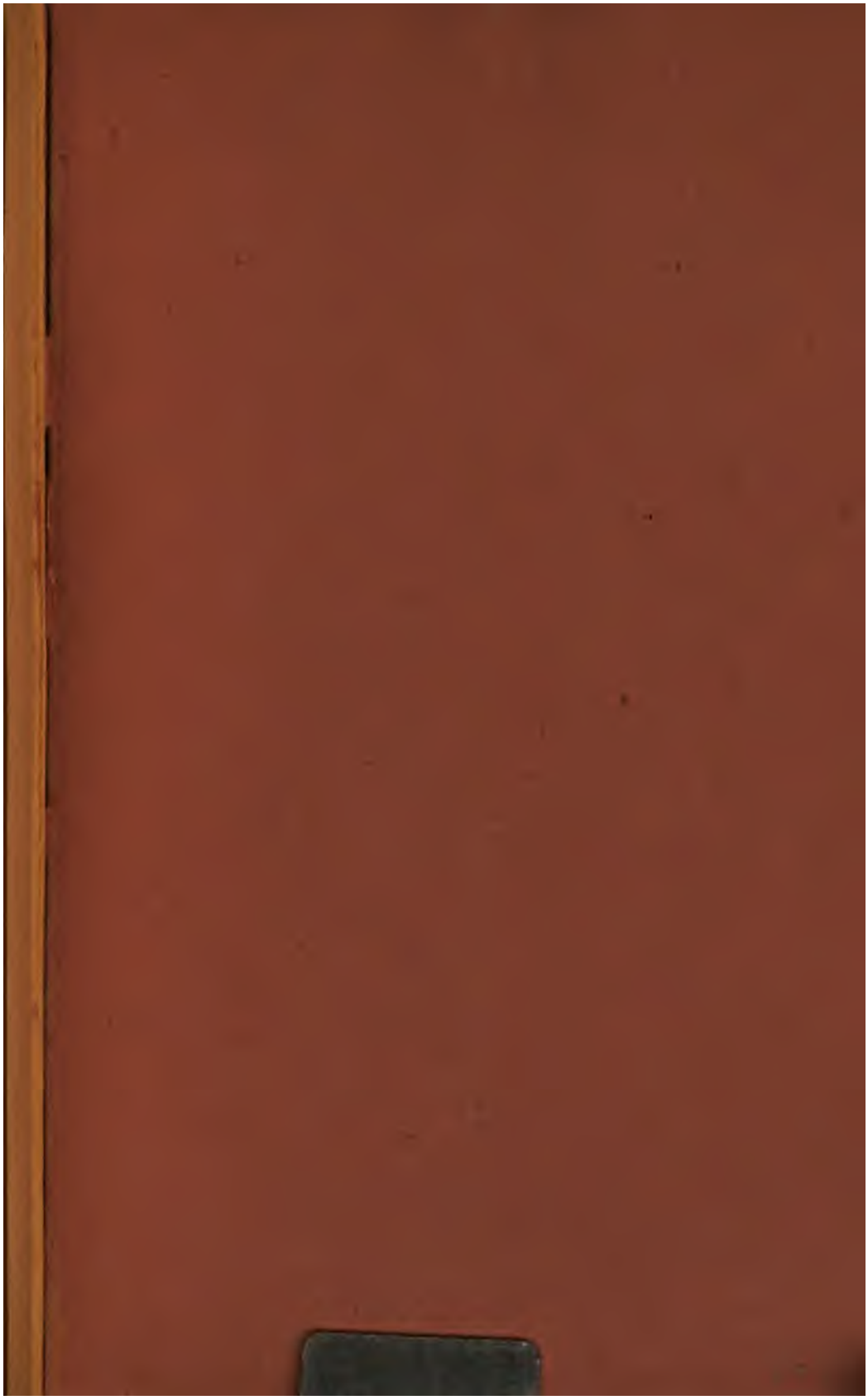
"Given under my Hand at the Council Chamber in "Hartford, this Eighteenth Day of September, in the "thirtieth year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord "GEORGE the Second, of Great Britain, France and "Ireland, King, defender of the Faith, &c. Annoque "Domini, 1756.

"T. FITCH."

"*GOD save the KING.*"

GOVERNOR THOMAS FITCH was the father of COLONEL THOMAS FITCH, who commanded the four New England Regiments in the French and Indian War; and in derision of these four Regiments, the now famous "Yankee Doodle" was composed and sung, at the time they were in camp on the banks of the Hudson River, at Greenbush, opposite Albany.

These Regiments performed their full share in the attack on Fort Ticonderoga, and suffered a greater loss, in proportion to their numbers, than the British Army.

With respects of

John Fitch